

BEAR AND BILLY GOAT.

Bill Withers and Sam Snively Arrange a Contest Which Surprises the Natives.

A Terrific Scrimmage Between Three Billy Goats and a Black Bear.

Kaleidoscopic Twirl of Horns, Hair and Wool Mingled in One Miscellaneous Bunch—All Bets Off.

The mountaineers of Pocahontas county, W. Va., are always ready to lay work aside and see a fight of any kind—the bloodier the better. But it fell to the lot of old Bill Withers, an old hunter, and Sam Snively, one of his neighbors, to vary the monotony recently with something entirely unique. Last winter Withers captured a full grown black bear in a trap. He penned the animal in a strong log structure and kept it in good condition, but it was so fierce that he never could do anything with it, and he was about to kill it, when one day not long ago old Snively came along.

Snively was the proud owner of a trio of the meanest and crossdest billy goats that ever chewed a tomato can or broke up a country school. He had often tried to give them away, but nobody would have them, although half the people in the district had threatened to shoot them on sight. This was the condition of things when Snively rode up to Withers' house, where, as a matter of course, it being a generally idle time, the conversation turned upon the subject of something in the way of sport. Suddenly a bright thought struck Snively.

"Say, Bill," said he, "I'll tell you what I'll do: I'll bet my saddle horse agin your mare that I have three old billy goats which kin lick that bar o' yours."

"Great thunder!" said Bill, "I'll take that bet. I know your durned goats kin keep the flies off'n him, but it'll be fun for the boys. When shall the fite cum off?"

"Less see," said Snively, retrospectively: "it'll take maybe a week to ketch them goats and build a big pen to fite in, and get the news to the nabs. This is Tuesday; say next Thursday week. How'll that suit?"

It was agreed that Thursday of the following week should be the time, and the place was fixed at a spot on Withers' farm, as it was supposed there would be more trouble in getting the bear than the goats to the ground. During the week Snively and Withers had notified the neighbors, who set to with a will to assist. The goats were trapped—the only safe way to get the pugnacious brutes—and a big rail pen, about seventy feet in diameter and ten feet high, was built. The outcome of it all was described by a native to a correspondent of the New York World.

When the morning of the day set opened the whole country was on the spot to the number of several hundred, including a dozen or so of women and twice as many half-grown boys. The goats—tremendous fellows, with terrible horns and exaggerated tempers—were brought to the ground tied by the feet and hauled in a wagon. They were lifted out and put in a pen adjoining the fighting arena, when their lashings were cut loose and their captors took hastily to the fence, out of harm's reach. The animals were to be left in their pen until after dinner, by which time it was believed that their circulation would be fully restored and their stiffening limbs again return to their natural elasticity. The bear was left in the pen and, as he had been given nothing to eat since the day before, he was in a ferocious humor. Old Withers and the crowd collected in the yard in front of the house and lay in the shade, talking and joking and eating their lunch, which they washed down with an occasional touch of the contents of suspicious looking jugs.

About 1 o'clock preparations were made for the fight. A long pole, twenty feet in length, with a slipnoose of chain in its center, was brought out. The noose was let down between the cracks in the bear's pen, where, after considerable trouble, it was at last caught about his neck. The roof of the pen and one end were then torn out and four strong men at each end of the pole dragged and pulled the bear to the opening in the pit, where he was firmly tied to a chain about thirty feet long, which in turn was fastened to stake in the center of the arena, after which the noose was slackened and pulled over the bear's head. Everything now being ready the bars separating the pen were let down.

The bear was in a terrible rage and tore about the pen trying in vain to break his chain and get at the mountaineers. The goats were also in an exaggerated state of mind, and in fit condition to fight at the drop of a hat. As soon as the bars were down the goats trotted through into the main pen, but upon catching sight of the bear they hesitated, whistled and stamped their feet, while the hair on their backs rose stiff and straight. Meanwhile the bear had got sight of his enemies, and, as he was hungry, he made straight for the five-foot length of his chain. The open challenge for a fight was not to be ignored. One old fellow, the patriarch of the gang, lowered his head and made a bound, and before the bear knew what was coming a bombshell of horns, legs and feet struck him such a terrific blow in the stomach that he keeled over and lay flat on his back. The other goats were not far behind their leader when they let him have it, one hitting him on the rump and the other in the side.

These hard raps stirred up the bear's already sour temper, and he quickly got on his feet just as one of the goats made a second rush at him. Just as the billy got within reach brum let fly a paw and sent the goat rolling and tumbling twenty feet away, but he wasn't quick enough to avoid the next one, which gave him a jam between the ribs that made him snarl and whine. The third one gave him a cracker in the side, but didn't get away in time to avoid a blow from the left duke of the bear, which sent him tumbling after No. 1. By this time No. 1 had regained his feet, and, with a wicked blink, he again went hammer and tongs, struck the bear squarely between the forelegs, and over went goat and bear, the goat getting a wipe from the sharp claws which laid open in his side a gap of six inches. Before brain could regain his feet and wind he got two more rib roasters which knocked him flatter than a dry town in Missouri. The last round hurt the bear terribly and he howled with pain and rage.

It now began to look as though the goats were going to have a walk-over, but brum, finding it hard lines to fight three such pugilistic cusses in the open, changed his tactics. He backed away the length of his chain, which brought him to the fence and prevented the hairy torpedoes from taking him in the rear. When he had got near the end of his chain, the bear laid down on his back and brought his four feet close together, making a huge, black, woolly bunch, which the goats all charged at once. The three goats arrived at their destination about the same time, but they were met in different manner this time. The claws of the bear flew outward, striking two of his enemies, ripping one of them wide open, while the other received a terrible clawing about the neck. The disemboweled billy struggled to his feet and made one last effort for revenge. He sprang at the bear and struck him squarely in the face, but it was his last effort. Another rip from the black paws and he was a defunct billy. By this time the bear had been so thoroughly drubbed and banged that he was in a sorry condition, but his enemies were no better

off. The living goats were both badly cut up, but their tempers were still peppery, and they determined to fight it out if it took all summer. They now changed their tactics, one taking one side of the bear and the other the opposite.

For a few minutes it was hard to tell which was the bear and which was the goats, as the kaleidoscopic twirl of horns, hair and wool were intermingled in one miscellaneous bunch. When business adjourned for a recess only one goat toed the scratch—the other one was lying across the body of the bear, dead as the reputation of a politician, while the bear himself seemed to have lost all interest in the affair and only wanted to be let alone to commune with nature. Both animals were nearly gone, but a few minutes' rest brought them around sufficiently to finish the game, and as both were determined to conquer it was soon brought to a conclusion. With a last effort the bear struggled to his feet and rose half upon his haunches, after throwing aside the dead goat, and waited. He didn't have to wait long; the last of the billys was ready. The goat pawed the ground, gave a faint whistle of rage and sprang at his fainting enemy, striking him in the pit of the stomach and knocking him over on his back, where he lay without a movement. It was now apparent the bear was done for, and the participants of the goat side of the fight gave a cheer of victory, and two of them climbed the fence to sponge down their champion, but when they pulled them apart they found that both were dead, the bear having had the life knocked out of him in the last charge, while the goat's neck was broken by the bear's paw just as they came together. The result of the fight was three dead goats and one dead bear. All bets were declared off, but as everybody had enjoyed the novel affair hugely no dissatisfaction was expressed.

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